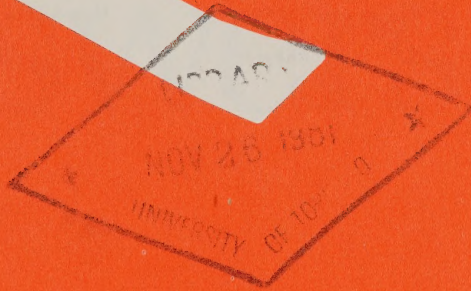



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# Crime in Ontario



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# Crime in Ontario -

# Questions & Answers



Ontario

Provincial  
Secretariat  
for Justice

The Honourable Gord Walker, Q.C.  
Provincial Secretary for Justice

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## TO THE READER . . .

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This booklet presents the most current evidence in response to some 'commonly' held perceptions - one might also say 'myths' - about crime and the criminal justice system in Ontario. It is designed to appeal to a wide public audience. Although the subject-matter is not simple in itself, every endeavour has been made to present this material in a simple and non-technical manner.

The perceptions identified may or may not be widely held. The booklet provides an opportunity to present facts which may shed further light and it is hoped in most cases dispel commonly held misconceptions. Opinions about crime tend to change over time. For this reason, what may be perceived to be true about crime today may take on a different perspective at a later date.

The data or evidence presented in response to the questions are the most recent available. Much of it is extracted from *Justice Statistics Ontario 1980*, a publication of the Provincial Secretariat for Justice, as well as being provided by various Ontario Government departments. To appreciate better the limitation of crime statistics the reader should read the section that follows.



## HOW MUCH CRIME: PROBLEMS IN MEASURING IT

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Police practices differ from city to city and these can affect how much crime and what kind is recorded. This is particularly so when multiple offences occur during a given incident or when there is some doubt as to whether or not an actual offence did occur. Much has been written to describe the many problems that exist in trying to determine the real crime rate as distinct from official police figures or 'reported' crime. Victim surveys, particularly in jurisdictions in the United States, including panel studies, offender reports and even participant observation studies, have demonstrated how variations in police reporting can take place.

Police statistics in Ontario are drawn from the records of municipal and regional forces, O.P.P. detachments and the R.C.M.P. Traffic offences and accident information are recorded separately from other offences and are not included in the totals.

Police statistics are officially reported to Statistics Canada and subsequently published. These reflect the various stages in the processing of a reported or observed offence. It is necessary to understand the precise meaning of the terms used by the police and in the statistical information in order to interpret the data, since 'reported' offences, for example, are not the same as 'actual' offences, and neither of these measures total crime as the data can only be a measure of reported crime.

It should be noted that when several offences occur in one incident, Statistics Canada requires that police report to it only the most serious offence. When reporting offences against the person, i.e., murder, attempted murder, rape, other sexual offences, wounding, assaults and other offences against the person, only one offence is reported for each victim. When offences against property, i.e. robbery, breaking and entering, theft, etc., are reported, only one offence is recorded for each distinct or separate incident. A distinct incident means the same time, location and circumstances.

---

An offence is a breach of legislation under the Criminal Code of Canada, other federal statutes, provincial statutes, and municipal by-laws.

*Reported or Known* offences are recorded by police at the first stage of an investigation, for example after a citizen reports having been a victim of a crime or having witnessed a crime. Offences reported or known by the police comprise all offences and alleged offences including unfounded offences, unsolved crimes and attempts.

*Unfounded* offences are recorded after police investigate a reported or known offence and establish that an offence did not happen, or was not attempted, or that there is insufficient evidence. An example is an automobile reported stolen but later discovered to be in use by another family member.

*Actual* offences are those which police determine, after investigation, have actually occurred. (Reported or known offences – unfounded offences = actual offences). Whether or not an offence is considered 'actual' can be affected by policies and practices of various police forces in the exercise of discretion or record-keeping, particularly for minor offences.

*Offences cleared by charge* are those for which an information has been laid against at least one person, charging him or her with that offence.

*Offences cleared otherwise* are those which, after investigation, police determine do not require further investigation, but which, for a number of reasons (e.g. person confesses to a crime and later dies; sufficient evidence is available but complainant refuses to prosecute, etc.), do not lead to charges being laid.

*Clearance rates* are based on the percentage of 'actual' offences which are cleared either by charge or otherwise.

# **IS CRIME IN ONTARIO RISING BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS?**

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## **THE FACTS:**

While there have been year-to-year fluctuations over the last decade the increases cannot be considered indicative of uncontrolled upward trends. The increases in the early 70's moderated in the mid seventies. After 1977 the trend has been upward. Between 1975 and 1979 the rate of crime per 100,000 population grew by an average of some 4% a year or 25% for the 6 year period.



Number of offences and rate per 100,000 population 1973-1979

Number and Rate	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	Average Year-to-Year Increase
Number of Offences	690,042	756,144	803,456	801,246	807,887	863,864	926,075	5.7%
Rate Per 100,000 Population	8,725.0	9,388.3	9,831.8	9,695.0	9,669.5	10,230.1	10,890.8	4.1%

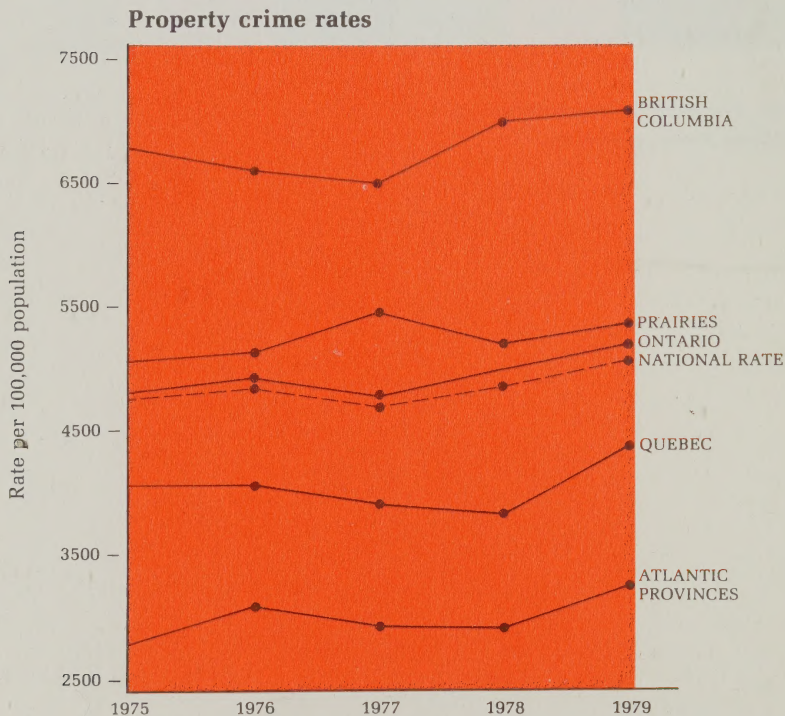
SOURCE: Justice Statistics Ontario 1980. Provincial Secretariat for Justice.

NOTE: Complete data for 1980 not available at time of printing.

# IS ONTARIO'S CRIME RATE THE HIGHEST IN THE COUNTRY?

## THE FACTS:

For many years Ontario's crime rates, while higher than those of the eastern provinces, have been lower than those in the west. This characteristic rise in crime rates from east to west holds true both for property and violent offences. Ontario's rates have tended to be just over the national rate.

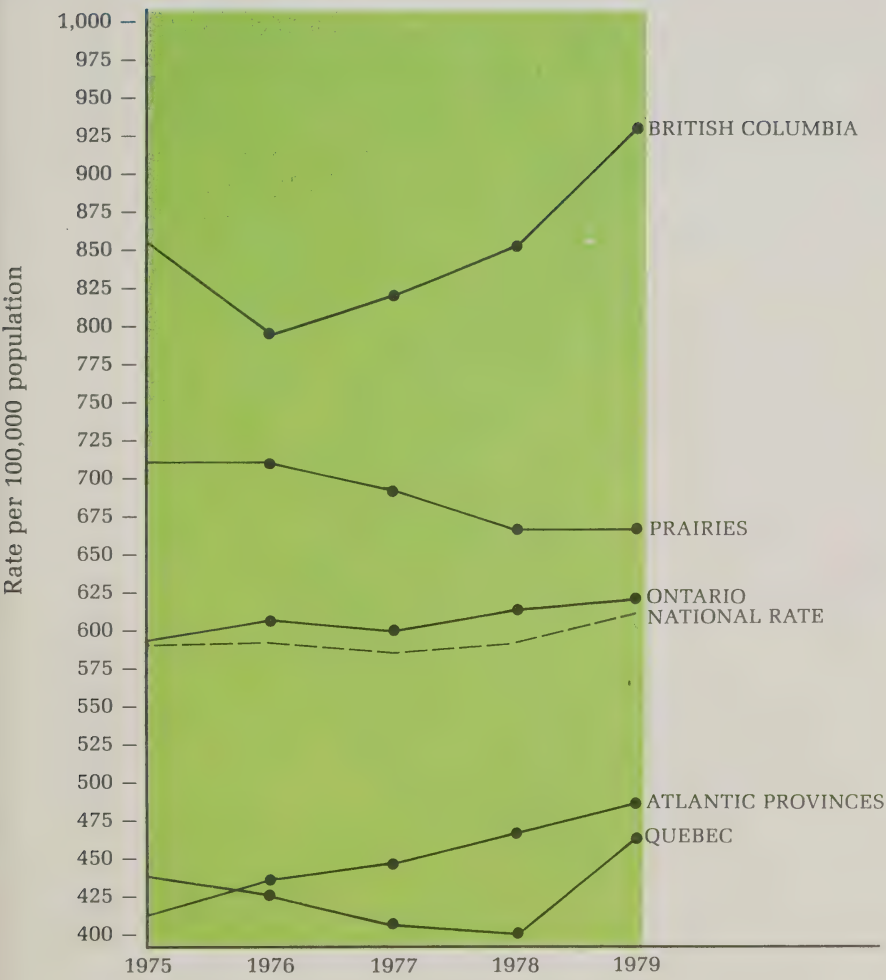


SOURCE: Justice Statistics Ontario 1980,  
Provincial Secretariat for Justice.



Crime rates

Violent crime rates



SOURCE: Justice Statistics Ontario 1980,  
Provincial Secretariat for Justice.

## **ARE MOST REPORTED OFFENCES IN ONTARIO OF A VIOLENT NATURE?**

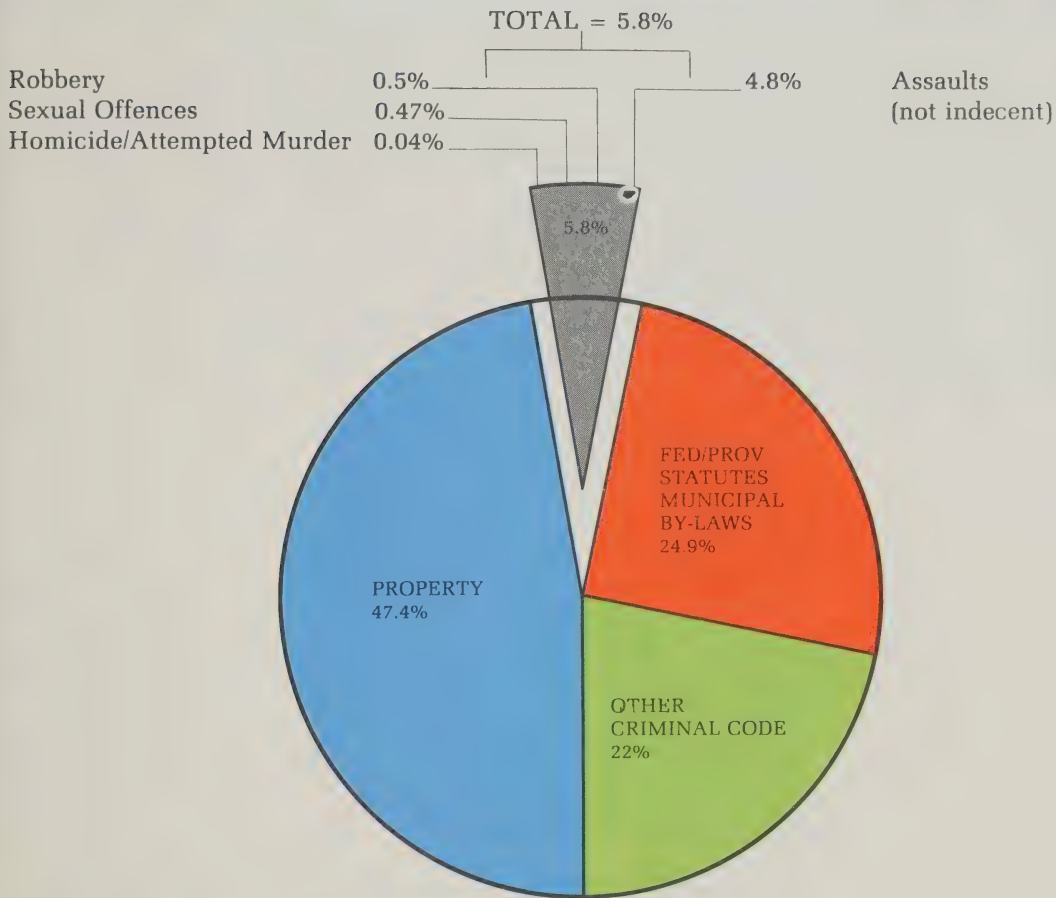
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### **THE FACTS:**

Quite the opposite is true. Violent offences which include homicide, attempted murder, sexual offences, assaults and robbery constitute a small proportion of total crime. The proportion of total crime accounted for by violent offences in 1979 was 5.8%. And even this proportion has shown some evidence of decreasing over the last decade. As a point of comparison, the proportion in 1973 was 6.5% and over the past five years it has averaged about 6.1%.



## Violent Crime



NOTE: (1) Chart excludes traffic offences

(2) The major portion of property offences includes "Theft Under \$200"  
(About 47% of all property offences)

(3) Nearly three quarters of the Fed/Prov Statutes and Municipal By-Laws is  
attributable to Provincial Statutes (mainly liquor offences)

SOURCE: Justice Statistics Ontario 1980,  
Provincial Secretariat for Justice.

## IS THERE MORE CRIME IN THE LARGER CITIES OF THE PROVINCE?

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### THE FACTS:

This perception is correct when the actual number of offences is used. However a more meaningful measure is the rate of crime per 100,000 population since this establishes a common denominator for comparisons. If the rate of total crime per 100,000 population is considered, the perception is not generally true. For example, in 1979 the rate of total crime (excluding traffic offences) for towns and villages was 14,209. This is higher than either of the other two population groupings. The rates for violent crime tend to be greater in the more populated areas while the opposite is true for property offences. Other criminal code and municipal by-law offence rates also tend to be greater in the less populated areas.



## Rate of crime

(per 100,000 population)

for selected population groupings<sup>1</sup>, by offence, 1979

Offence	Larger Urban Centres & Regions <sup>2</sup> (250,000 and over	Smaller Centres (25,000 to 250,000)	Towns and Villages (750 to 25,000)
Homicide	2.0	1.9	1.6
Attempted Murder	2.3	2.1	3.4
Sexual Offences	56.5	50.4	52.1
Assaults (not indecent)	545.2	536.4	520.0
Robbery	70.9	52.0	41.5
Break & Enter	1,086.4	1,120.2	1,212.8
Theft: Motor Vehicle	336.8	391.1	376.1
Theft: Over \$200	835.1	754.7	629.6
Theft: Under \$200	2,527.7	3,034.8	2,945.0
Have Stolen Goods	184.6	83.7	105.0
Frauds	444.0	416.7	528.9
Prostitution	20.4	1.3	1.1
Gaming & Betting	54.6	1.2	1.0
Offensive Weapons	86.0	73.6	78.3
Other Criminal Code	2,155.6	2,647.3	3,368.8
Drugs – Federal Statutes	291.8	150.7	263.8
Other Federal Statutes	29.3	19.2	52.1
Provincial Statutes	1,434.0	1,418.7	3,221.7
Municipal By-Laws	103.9	478.0	806.6
Rate of Total Crime	10,267.0	11,233.6	14,209.3
POPULATION TOTALS <sup>1</sup> ('000's)	4,552.3	1,818.3	522.1

1. Population groupings are based on reported population of the regions covered by particular municipal forces or O.P.P. detachments. Statistics Canada reports on groupings. Groups 1 and 2, 3-5, and 6-9 have been recombined to form categories. Group 10, or rural, is comprised of statistics from O.P.P. rural detachments and RCMP divisions which do not report population; hence rates are not calculated.

2. Includes Metropolitan Toronto, Hamilton-Wentworth, Peel Regional, Niagara Regional, Durham Regional, London, Ottawa and Waterloo Regional Police Force jurisdictions.

SOURCE: JUSTICE STATISTICS DIVISION, STATISTICS CANADA

# **IS ONTARIO'S HOMICIDE RATE CAUSE FOR REAL ALARM?**

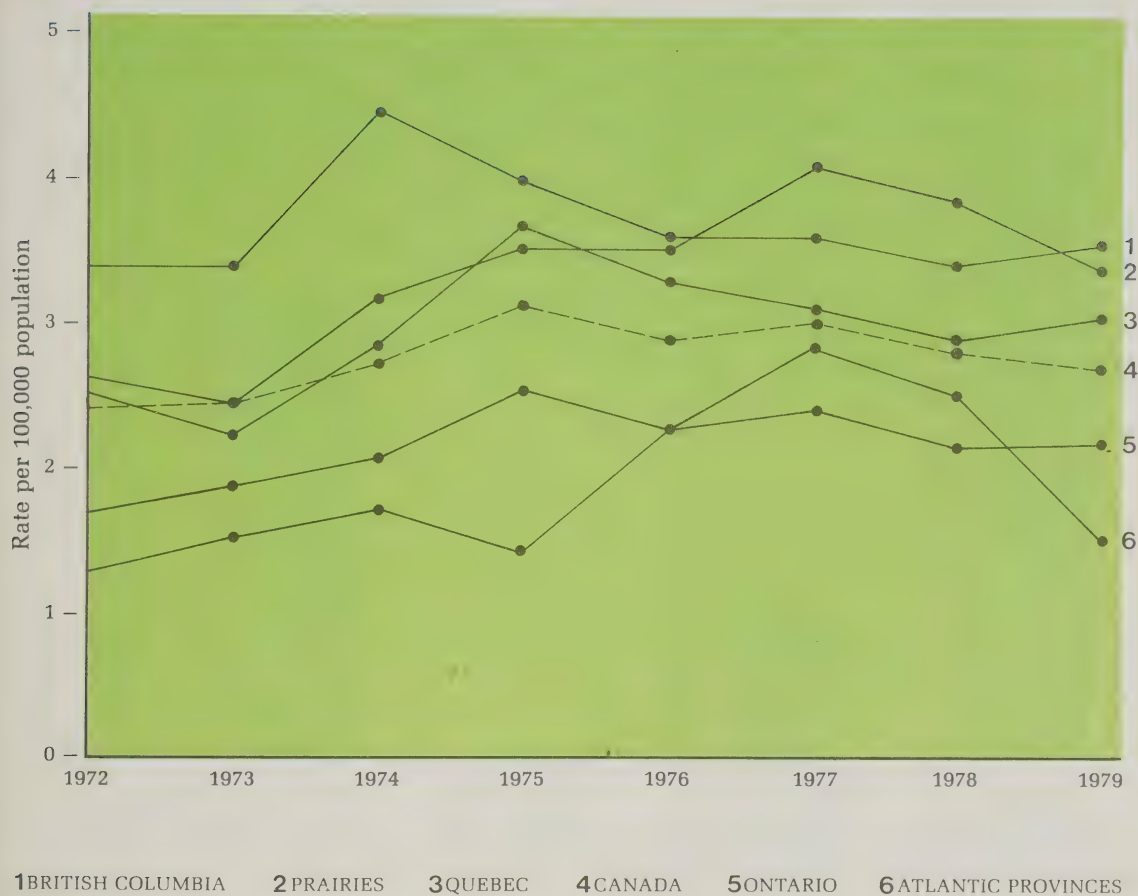
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## **THE FACTS:**

There has been little change in the number of homicides in Ontario since 1976. The rate of homicides for 1979 was 2.1 per 100,000 population - the second lowest behind the Atlantic Region. Since 1972, Ontario's homicide rate has been consistently lower than the national average and has been lowest or second lowest when compared to other parts of the country.



# Homicide rates



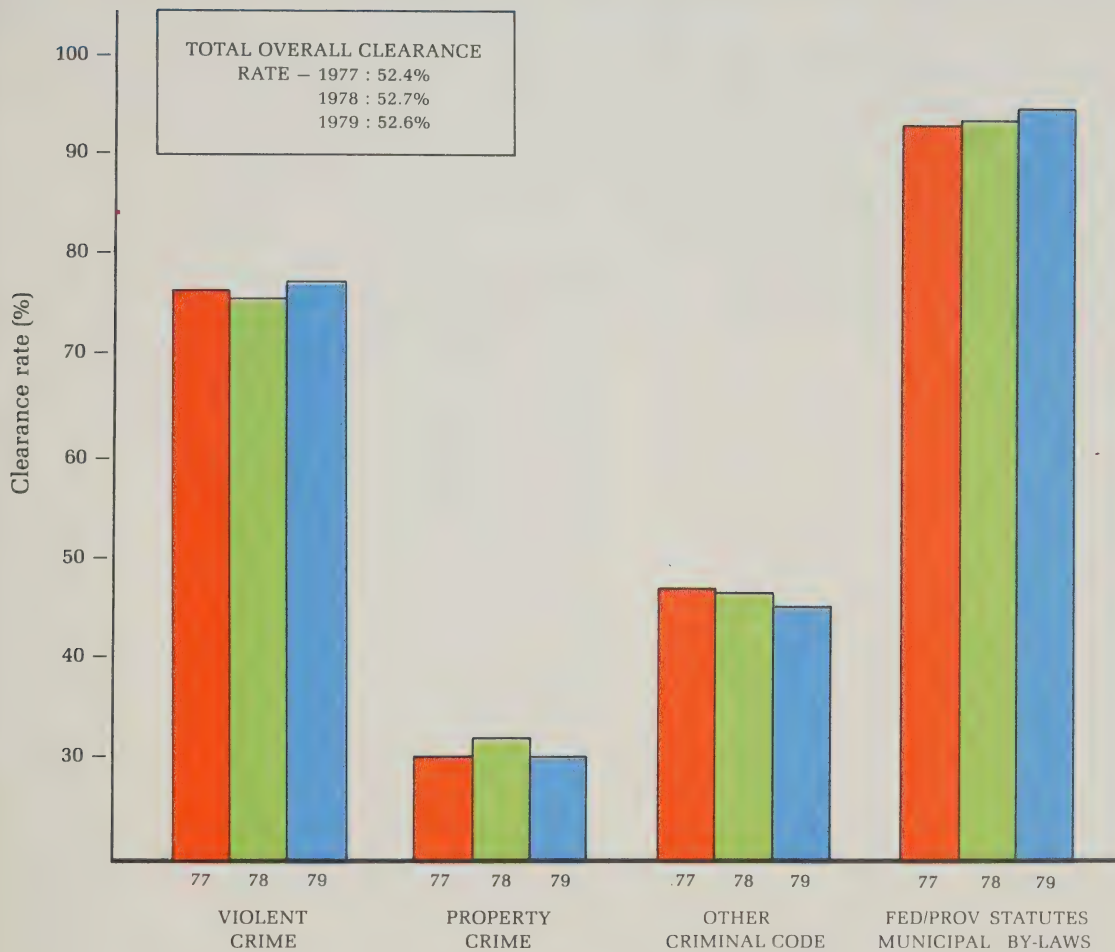
# ARE THERE FEWER AND FEWER CRIMES BEING SOLVED THESE DAYS?

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## THE FACTS:

The overall clearance rate (whether cleared by charge or cleared otherwise) has remained relatively constant over the past few years. In 1977 the rate was 52.4% and in 1979 it moved slightly to 52.6%. There is nevertheless a great deal of variation among specific crime categories. The clearance rate ranges from a low of about 30% for property offences to a high of about 77% for violent offences, 92% for Federal Statutes and 98% for Provincial Statutes. Generally speaking, the clearance rates for these crime categories have shown little variation from year to year.

## Clearance rates



SOURCE: *Justice Statistics Ontario 1980*, Provincial Secretariat for Justice.

Note: Complete data for 1980 not available at time of printing.



# DO PEOPLE LIVING IN LARGER CITIES REGARD CRIME AS THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM?

---

## THE FACTS:

From a recent (1979) Canada-wide survey of community concerns (by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation) Ontario residents ranked crime reduction after inflation and unemployment in terms of priority initiatives. (In other surveys where respondents are asked open-ended questions about major concerns, people rarely mention crime as a concern of high priority.) The study also pointed out that of the 23 cities included in the survey the 9 Ontario cities ranked lower on general fear of crime.

# Priority rankings of selected initiatives and general fear of crime

CITY	INITIATIVES <sup>1</sup>								
	Reducing inflation	Reducing unemployment	Reducing crime	Reducing traffic congestion	Protecting agricultural land from urban development	Protecting parks and open spaces in the city	Attracting new industry	Reducing air pollution	General Fear of Crime (rank) <sup>2</sup>
Calgary	1	4	2	3	11	5	20	10	4
Charlottetown	1	2	11	12	9	13	11	24	23
Chicoutimi	2	1	18	21	6	9	3	15	22
Edmonton	2	3	1	4	10	8	14	12	2
Halifax	1	2	3	11	12	9	7	20	3
*Hamilton	2	1	4	15	5	7	12	3	5
*Kitchener	1	2	4	20	3	4	11	17	18
*London	2	1	5	7	3	4	8	17	12
Montreal	2	1	3	15	7	8	14	9	6
*Ottawa-Hull	1	2	3	14	4	5	13	16	14
Quebec City	2	1	4	17	5	7	8	14	13
Regina	2	3	1	10	15	4	11	23	1
Saint John	1	2	4	20	22	17	5	3	21
Saskatoon	1	3	2	9	12	5	4	24	7
*St. Catharines	1	2	7	16	3	8	4	12	20
St. John's	2	1	4	7	15	8	6	24	10
*Sudbury	2	3	7	12	9	10	1	16	17
*Thunder Bay	1	2	3	16	15	7	4	17	9
*Toronto	1	2	3	12	5	11	14	8	19
Vancouver	1	2	3	10	4	5	15	14	8
Victoria	1	2	4	12	5	8	6	20	16
*Windsor	1	2	4	7	12	15	3	6	15
Winnipeg	1	2	3	8	12	9	5	21	11

1. Ranks range from 1 to 26, with 1 being the highest priority and 26 the lowest priority.  
2. The higher the number the lower the general fear of crime.  
SOURCE: Public Priorities in Urban Canada: A Survey of Community Concerns, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1979.

# HAS FEMALE INVOLVEMENT IN CRIME GREATLY INCREASED IN RECENT YEARS?

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## THE FACTS:

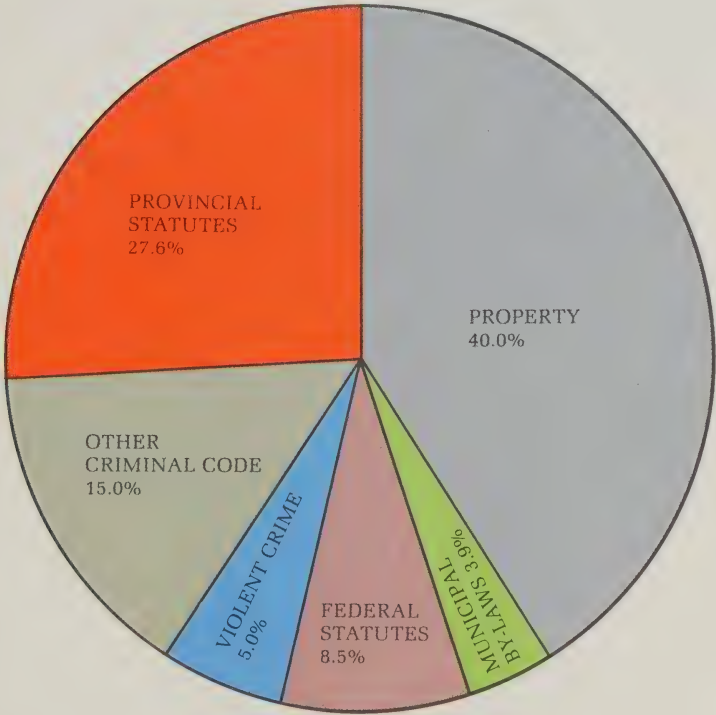
Police statistics indicate that the proportion of total persons charged who are women has changed very little over recent years. Over the last four years it has remained at or about 12%. Their offences tend to be of a less serious and non-violent nature. Some caution should be exercised in interpretation of these findings as the number of people charged may not indicate the actual amount of crime committed. Attitudes in society may contribute to differences from men in the arrest, charge and incarceration rates for women.



Women charged as a proportion  
of total persons charged

1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
10.4%	10.3%	11.0%	12.1%	11.6%	12.0%	11.9%

CHARGES FOR FEMALE OFFENDERS 1979



SOURCE: Justice Statistics Ontario 1980,  
Provincial Secretariat for Justice.

# ARE CRIME STATISTICS AN ACCURATE MEASURE OF THE AMOUNT OF CRIME COMMITTED?

---

## THE FACTS:

Crime statistics represent only those crimes which have been detected by or *reported* to the police. Much of the actual crime, however, is not reported or detected. Although the evidence is not precise, estimates suggest that reported crime can represent from 20% to 60% of actual crime with a great deal of variation among specific crimes. For example, studies conducted in Ontario and British Columbia indicate that only about 60% of all Break and Enters are reported to the police. These reporting rates can be affected by a host of factors.

---

## **SOME FACTORS WHICH CAN AFFECT REPORTING OF CRIME TO POLICE**

(Not shown in order of importance)

- Economic Conditions
- Attitudes and Mores of Society
- Strength of Police Force
- Policies of Prosecuting Officials
- Attitudes and Policies of the Courts and Corrections
- Time Lags in Criminal Justice Process
- Size of Community
- Legal Sanctions
- Clearance Rates
- Public Confidence in Police

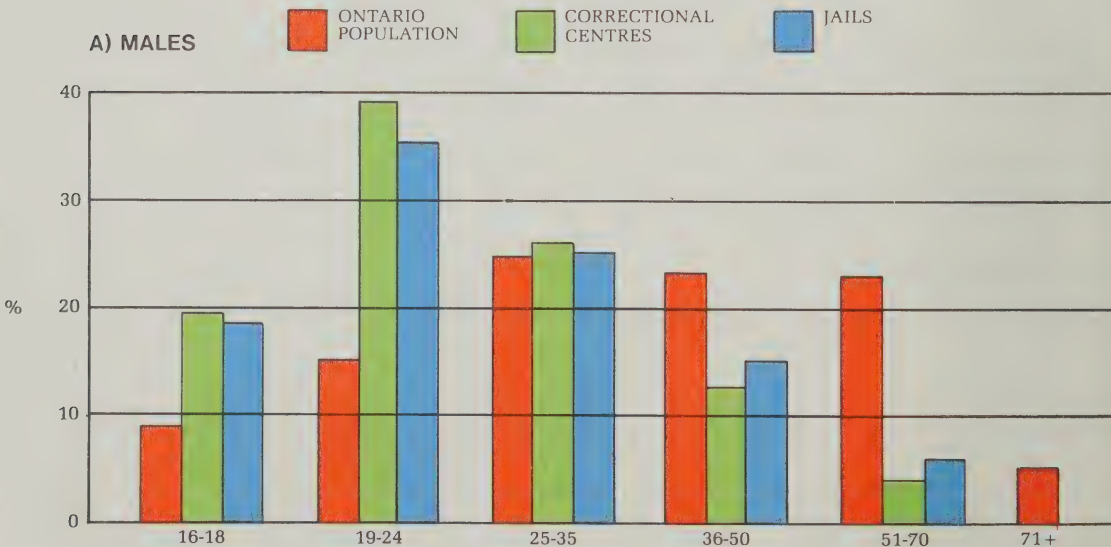


# ARE INMATES YOUNG AND OLD, ALIKE?

## THE FACTS:

The major portion of people in Jail or in Ontario Correctional Centres is less than 25 years of age. The 19 to 24 years group is one of the most 'crime prone' groups. If one looks at the age groups in Ontario's population it can be seen that the number of young persons in Jail or other Correctional Institutes is over-represented.

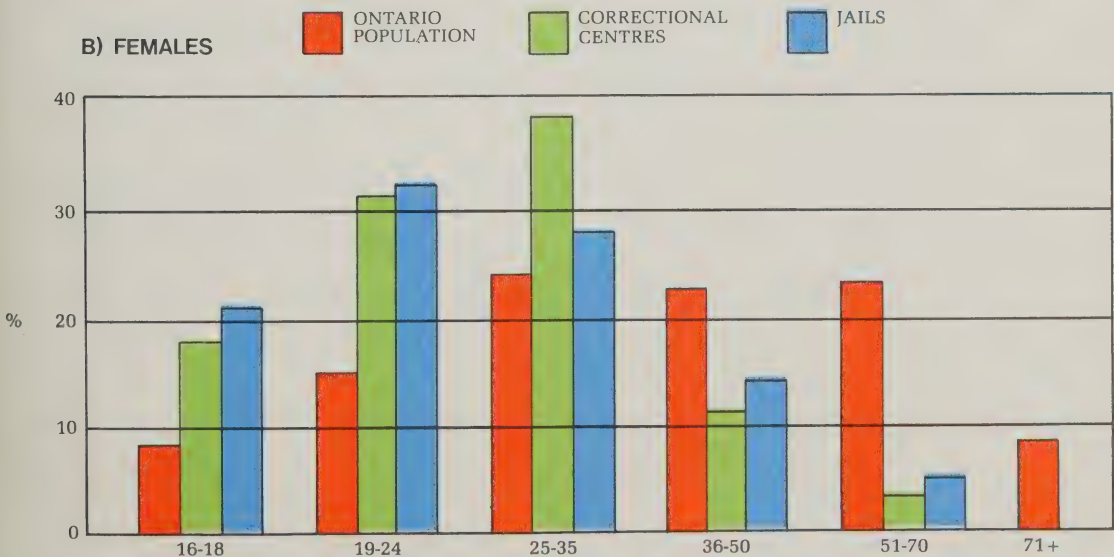
Women inmates, who represent only a small proportion of the total inmate population, tend to be older than the men.



# Persons committed to correctional centres and jails

## Persons committed to correctional centres and jails

Percentage breakdown by age groups of persons 16 years and over  
(FISCAL YEAR 1979-1980)



# **HOW MUCH INVOLVEMENT DOES THE ORDINARY CITIZEN HAVE IN ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMS FOR OFFENDERS?**

---

## **THE FACTS:**

During the 1979/80 fiscal year about 3,800 volunteers were involved in various programs of the Ministry of Correctional Services. Two-thirds provided volunteer work in Institutions while one-third assisted in Probation and Parole Services. During March 1980, some 3,200 cases, or almost 13% of the total Probation and Parole caseload, was being supervised by volunteers. And during that year there was an 18% increase in the number of volunteers over the previous year.



---

## SOME VOLUNTEERS ACTIVITIES

- Tutoring
- Supervising Probationers
- Remedial Reading Assistance
- Psychological Testing
- Researching
- Presentence Reports for the Courts
- Job Finding
- Teaching Arts and Crafts
- Escorting Inmates on Temporary Absence in the Community
- Conducting Recreational Programs
- Life-Skills Counselling
- Participating in Drinking-Driving Awareness Programs

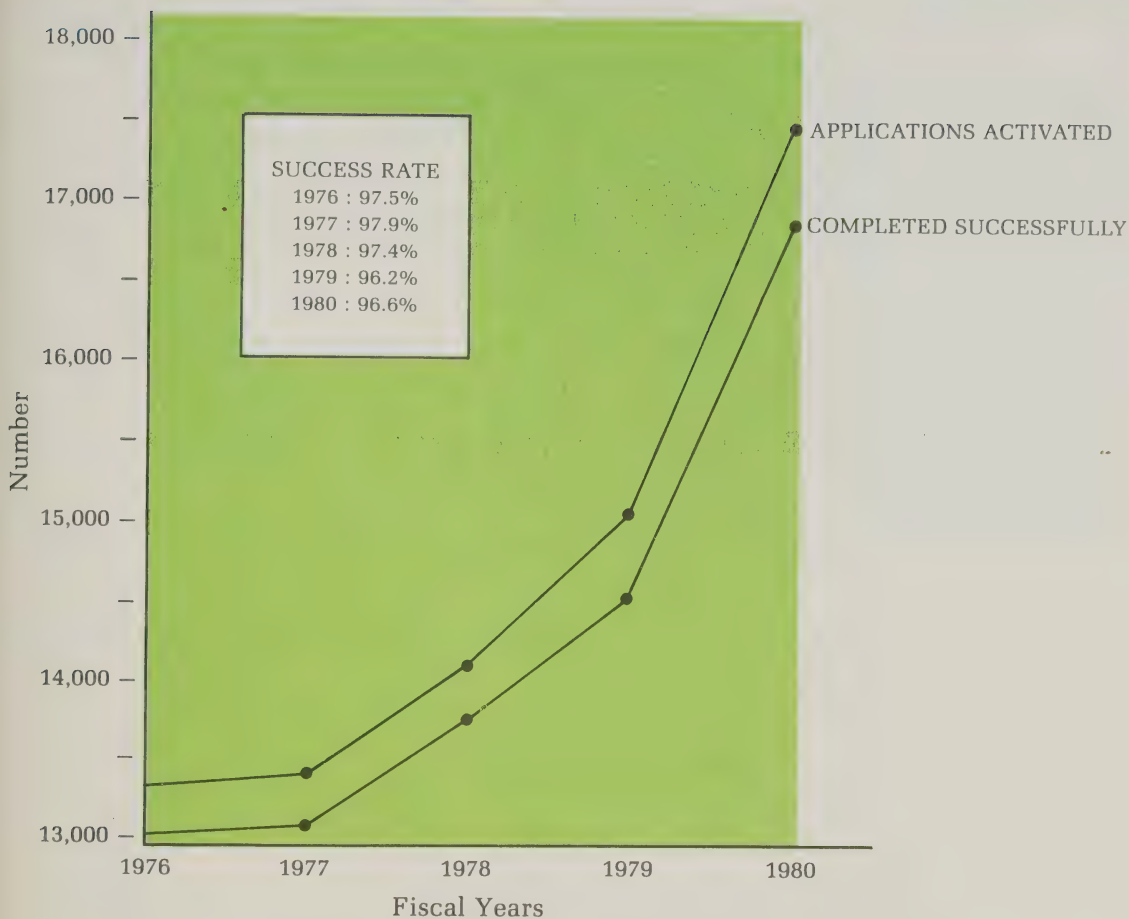
# **CAN INMATES IN PROVINCIAL INSTITUTIONS BE TRUSTED WHILE ON TEMPORARY LEAVE?**

---

## **THE FACTS:**

The number of inmates of Ontario Correctional Institutions out on a temporary pass (either for humanitarian reasons or to pursue education or employment) has increased some 30% between 1976 and 1980. During this time the programme's success rate has consistently been over 96%. It should be noted that even those individuals considered to have unsuccessfully completed a temporary absence pass do not as a general rule commit serious infractions.

## Temporary absence success



SOURCE: Justice Statistics Ontario 1980, Provincial Secretariat for Justice.

# DO MOST PEOPLE "REPEAT" WITHIN A YEAR OF COMPLETING THEIR SENTENCE?

---

## THE FACTS:

The latest information indicates that, of some 54,200 persons who completed their sentence during 1978, about two-fifths or over 42% were again inmates on probation or in other programmes of the Ontario Ministry of Correctional Services by the end of 1979. It was found that persons with a prior record had a greater tendency to repeat with a rate almost twice that of persons with not prior record.



## Repeat rate by prior record and releasing agency

SENTENCE COMPLETED FROM:	NO PRIOR RECORD	PRIOR RECORD
CORRECTIONAL CENTRES	26.5%	55.7%
JAILS/ DETENTION CENTRES	37.9%	62.6%
PROBATION	15.6%	22.2%

SOURCE: Ontario Ministry of Correctional Services.

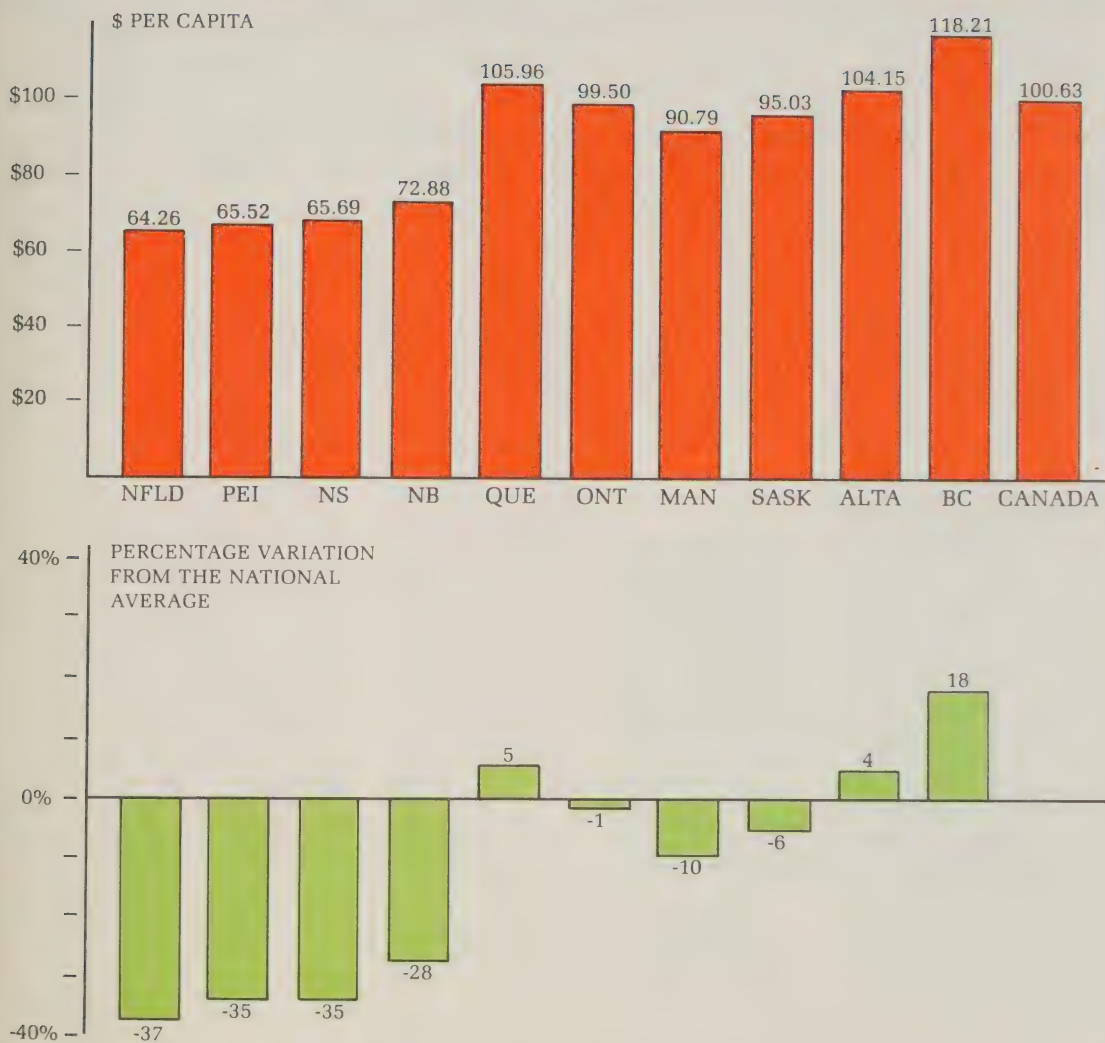
## WHAT DOES ONTARIO SPEND IN JUSTICE SERVICES?

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### THE FACTS:

In the fiscal year of 1977/78 Ontario spent \$100 per capita. This compares with \$106 for Quebec, \$104 for Alberta, and \$118 for British Columbia. Ontario's expenditure is slightly below the national average of \$101.

## Justice Services: Per capita expenditures 1977-78 and percentage variation from average



SOURCE: National Task Force on the Administration of Justice, 1979.

# IS PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC AND PROPERTY CARRIED OUT ENTIRELY BY THE OFFICIAL POLICE FORCES?

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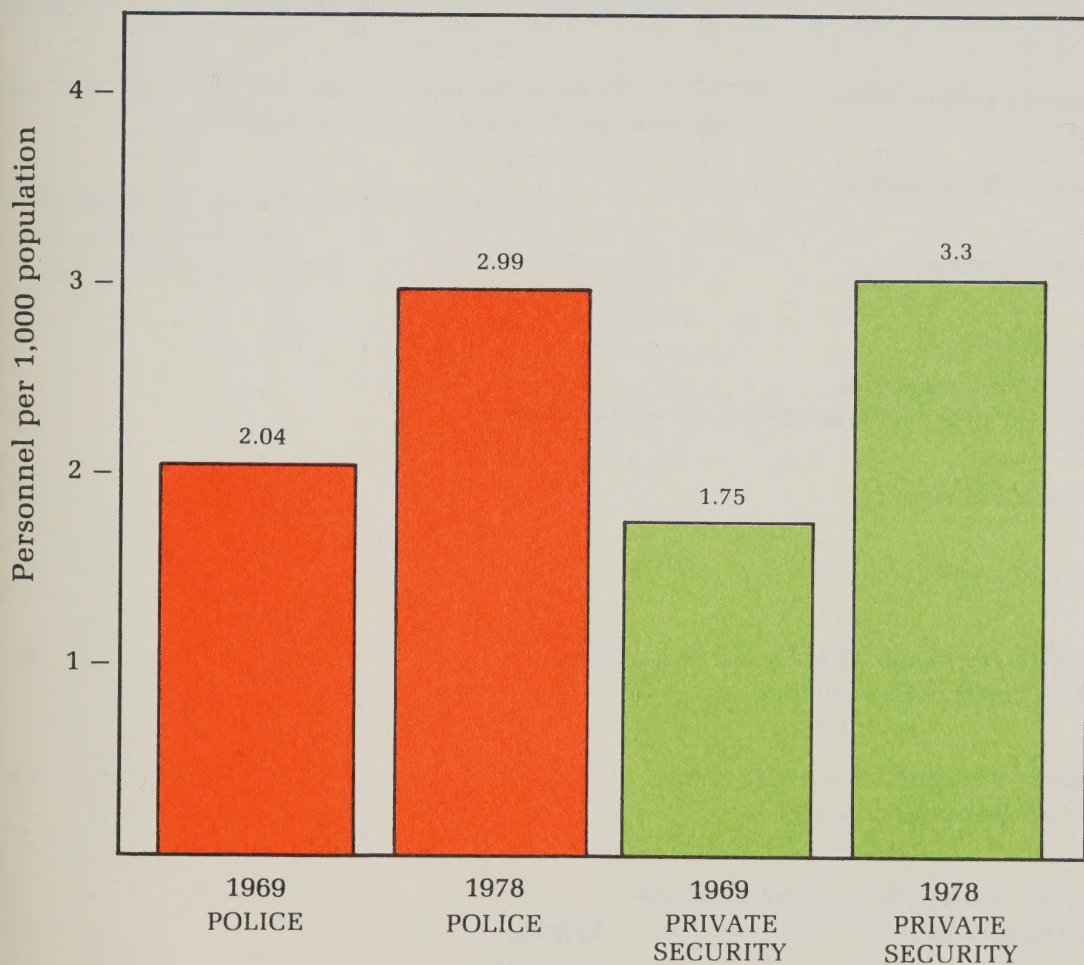
## THE FACTS:

In Ontario, the number of private security employees has grown from 1.75 personnel per 1,000 population in 1969 to 3.3 personnel per 1,000 population in 1978. The comparable rates for police personnel are 2.04 and 2.99 respectively.

'Private security' refers to licensed and unlicensed security guards and investigators, employed by security companies or private employers. Police are the number of O.P.P. and municipal police officers and civilian employees. Licensed private security personnel increased 110%, between 1969 and 1978. The O.P.P. Registration Branch estimates an equal or greater number of unlicensed 'in-house' security personnel.



**Employees of police and private security  
per 1,000 population  
Ontario, 1969 and 1978**



SOURCE: *Selected trends in Canadian Criminal Justice*,  
Solicitor General of Canada, 1979.

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